

Nō Studios Announces Dance Fest 2026

The fifth annual celebration will again bring together companies throughout the country to Milwaukee to celebrate dance

MILWAUKEE, Wis – February 24, 2026 – [Nō Studios](#), a center for the creative arts and activism in downtown Milwaukee, is proud to announce the return of [Dance Fest](#) on **Saturday, October 3rd, 2026**. Now in its fifth year, Dance Fest continues to grow, bringing together a curated lineup of elite performances. As always, this year's annual festival will showcase a variety of genres, including ballet, salsa, street, cultural and contemporary.

This expanded Dance Fest program will take place at the Marcus Performing Arts Center's outdoor Peck Pavilion along the Milwaukee River, as well as the beautiful indoor Wilson Theater in Vogel Hall. The family-friendly festival will also include youth dance performances, a community centric daytime program, live music, local food vendors, and a chance to get a behind-the-scenes look at the technical rehearsal.

"We are happy to once again partner with Dance Fest and applaud their growth as they expand their program, incorporating two of our venues," said Kevin Giglinto, President and CEO, Marcus Performing Arts Center. "We look forward to welcoming all participants and guests to this year's program and continuing the exploration of various dance forms and the celebration of culture in the heart of downtown."

Nō Studios was founded by Milwaukee native and Oscar winning screenwriter John Ridley, whose family has long been a part of the fabric of Milwaukee arts and politics, working to amplify underrepresented voices, and elevate the city as a vibrant arts destination. Built as a collaborative, social community for artists and activists, Nō Studios hosts screenings and panel discussions, invests in local artists through gallery showings and live performances, and produces original television programs, including Creating Milwaukee, mini-documentary series focusing on Milwaukee creatives across various disciplines.

"Nō Studios looks forward to bringing Dance Fest back to Milwaukee in 2026," said John Ridley, Nō Studios founder and CEO. "Dance Fest is our primary vehicle for celebrating the regional creative community and we strive to grow it every year."

This year's Dance Fest will feature the return of Morgan Williams, founder of Water Street Dance Milwaukee, as curator of the event.

"Each year, we discover new ways to make No Dance Fest even more memorable than the last," said Mr. Williams. "As I step into my third year as curator, my goal is to continue building on that momentum by introducing exceptional companies to our audiences and expanding the festival's artistic reach."

Nō Studios looks forward to welcoming participating companies throughout the Midwest as their program continues to grow. In addition to the invited participants, Nō Studios will create a platform for interested companies to submit applications to win a place on the curated program.

Performances and programming will take place **Saturday, October 3rd** and tickets will go on sale this summer.

Dance Fest is sponsored by the [Marcus Performing Arts Center](#), and media partner [WISN 12 News](#).

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ABOUT NŌ STUDIOS:

Founded by Oscar winner and Milwaukee native, John Ridley, [Nō Studios](#) is a collaborative workspace, hybrid experience platform and social community that offers an environment for artists and activists to come together. The name for Nō Studios derives from the wordplay between a rejection artists are so often told, with, nō, the Sino-Japanese root word for "skill" or "talent".

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